

EXPOSITION

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ZECHARIAH XIV.

BY S. BLISS.

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Exposition of the 14th Chapter of Zechariah.

We have been repeatedly requested to give an exposition of this chapter, but till now, a press of other matter has prevented us. We are of the opinion that it is susceptible of a literal interpretation, without conflicting in any respect, with any other portion of God's holy word.

The chapter begins with a prediction, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee," 1st verse ; without showing the distance of time to that event. Then in the 2d and 3d verses is predicted first the warring of all nations against Jerusalem ; and after that the Lord is to "go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle." "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished ; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against

those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." The time which is to intervene between the fulfillment of these two events is not given, but the time of the last event is given; for it is said in the 4th verse, when the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations, "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." This, therefore, is connected with the second coming of Christ. Parallel portions of scripture show us when the other prediction—the fighting of all nations against Jerusalem—was to be accomplished.

According to the 25th chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah, that prophet was commanded to take the wine cup of God's fury at the Lord's hand, and make all nations drink of it. "To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse, as it is this day," v. 18: "and all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth," verse 26.

This was to be their final overthrow as nations, for, "Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and

fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; Ye shall certainly drink."

This tribulation was to begin with Jerusalem, and to be consummated on all the nations that had fought against Jerusalem ; " For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished ? Ye shall not be unpunished ; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts," v. 29.

The overthrow of all these nations is in connection with the second advent of Christ, and is therefore a parallel passage with Zech. xiv. 3 ; for, according to the 38th verse, it is when the Lord " hath forsaken his covert as a lion," or, as our Savior expresses it, when He shall come " as the lightning from heaven." The prophet is also commanded to prophesy " against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation ; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation ; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth ; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh ; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the

earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth : they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried ; they shall be dung upon the ground.” Jer. xxv. 30—33. In this prophesy, no intimation is given when the judgment was to begin, on the city which is called by the name of the Lord ; but in the 9th chapter of Daniel, when that prophet had been considering the 25th of Jeremiah, and had seen that God had fulfilled the seventy years which were predicted in the 11th and 12th verses of that chapter, that he would accomplish the desolations of Jerusalem, he was shown more fully the distance of time between the two events.

Fifteen years previous to that event, Daniel had had the vision recorded in the 8th of Dan. ; which at the time was all explained to him, with the exception of what was denoted by the little horn, and the length of the 2300 days. He was told that the vision was to continue 2300 days, and then the sanctuary was to be cleansed. Daniel, however, says that he was astonished at the vision, but none understood it ; and it is evident from the explanation that had been given, that his ignorance was owing to the mystery respecting the *time*. His ignorance of that event seems to have continued, until he contemplated the fulfillment of the seventy years, as predicted in Jeremiah 25th. According to that prediction, “these nations” were to “serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years

are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." Jer. xxv. 11, 12. This was fulfilled in that night in which "was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom." Dan. v. 30, 31.

Daniel then evidently supposed, that with the accomplishment of these seventy years, were also fulfilled the 2300 days; for we find by the 17th and 18th verses of Dan. 9th, that Daniel prayed for the very event that God had promised should be fulfilled at the end of the 2300 days, viz. the *cleansing of the sanctuary*. "Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy SANCTUARY *that is desolate*, for the Lord's sake."

That Daniel was in an error at that time, is evident from an angel's being sent swiftly, even the man Gabriel, that he had seen in the vision at the beginning of his supplications, to instruct him in the vision. And he informed him, and talked with him, and said, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding," &c., "for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter and consider the vision." verses 22 and 23. He informed Daniel that "*seventy sevens were cut off*" (for so the best scholars admit the original is,) "upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring

in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." These 70 weeks, or sevens, all admit to be weeks of years, or 490 years, and to terminate in the year A. D. 33—the year our Lord was crucified. There is nothing given from which to cut off the 70 weeks, but the 2300 days, and as the angel Gabriel had come to make him understand the vision, they must be sevens of just such periods of time, as those denoted in the vision ; and as the 70 weeks are proved to be weeks of years, the 2300 days from which they were cut off must be also years, and would leave 1810 years to be fulfilled from the end of the 490; which were cut off. Of these 70 weeks, Daniel was informed there would be 69 to the Messiah, and that he would confirm the covenant with many one week ; and after that " the people that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary," as is predicted in Jer. xxv. 18, 29, and " for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate," or desolator, as it reads in the margin, when the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth, even to the other, according to Jer. xxv. 30—33; and when the Lord shall fight against all the nations that fought against Jerusalem, as in Zech. xiv. 3. Our Savior in Luke xxi. 24, predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, and declared that it should be " trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." It is evident, therefore, from these

parallel portions of scripture, that the destruction of Jerusalem spoken of in the 2d verse of Zech. 14, was accomplished by the Romans ; and that the going forth of the Lord to fight against those nations, in the day that his feet shall stand on the mount of Olives, is yet in the future, and will be fulfilled in connection with the second advent of Christ.

The prophet Zechariah then proceeds to predict, that "the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof," and the inhabitants will flee from that land. 5 v, "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains ; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal ; yea ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah : and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." 'This must be after probation has closed, the righteous dead are raised, and the righteous living changed, and together are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, for "*all the saints*" come with him. From the 6th to the 11th verses inclusive, is a prediction of the restoration of the land of Palestine, and its condition when the saints are thus restored, "and the Lord shall be king over all the earth ;" and "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark : but, it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night : but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ; half of them toward the for-

mer sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea : in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth : in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem : and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction ; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Then, the promise will be fulfilled that God made to Abraham, that he would give to him all the land of Canaan, and to his seed for an everlasting possession. Then, the saints of the Most High will have taken the kingdom to possess it forever, even forever and ever. Then will the God of heaven have set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ; but which will break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand forever. And then upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness ; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

From the 12th to the 15th verses inclusive, is a prediction of " the PLAGUE wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem," when he shall " go forth to fight against those nations," as is predicted in the 3d verse. " And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem ; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their

feet, and their eyes shall consume in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.”

This plague, according to the prediction, is to fall alike on man and beast, and denotes a complete destruction of all those on whom it will fall, and all the wicked will be destroyed by it, for, according to the 16th verse *every one that is left of all the nations* will worship the Lord. “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” That all the wicked will be thus destroyed by this plague, is further evident from verses 17—19: “And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall

be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." As *every one that is left* will go up and worship the Lord of hosts, it follows that "whoso will not come up," and of whom it is said "there shall be the plague," &c., must be of the number of those whose eyes consumed away in their holes, were destroyed by that plague and were therefore not of those who were *left*, every one of whom it is said, will go up and worship the Lord of hosts. If every one who is left will worship the Lord, there can none be left, who will not worship him, and therefore the plague in the 18th verse, must be the same plague that is spoken of in the 12th verse, and which will be poured out when the Lord shall fight against those nations.

When the wicked are thus destroyed, and every one of all the nations which are left, worship the King, then holiness will fill the whole earth, as is described in the 20th and 21st verses. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD ; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts : and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein : and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Then the covenant which God made with our father Abraham will be fulfilled, and his seed will dwell in the earth, restored to its Eden state, forever.